

A N N U A L R E P O R T

-- of the --

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1940.

TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS
OF THE BOROUGH OF BURY ST. EDMUNDS.



Mr. Mayor, Mrs. Wise and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my 38th Annual Report on the Public Health Services. Like its predecessor it is, for reasons of economy due to the war, restricted almost entirely to statistics, with comparative figures for 1939 inserted in brackets. You will be able to draw your own conclusions as to the maintenance of its efficiency by the Public Health Department. There are, however, one or two matters which call for special comment. Foremost is the serious outbreaks of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria which occurred in 1940. The figures given in the appropriate table show that notifications in both instances amounted to approximately five times the average number during the last twenty years. The serious point which arises from this fact is that at the height of the epidemic, it was found impossible to obtain additional nursing assistance anywhere. In September 1939 a Commission of Enquiry into evacuation visited the Borough under Miss Florence Horsburgh M.P. The only point raised by me during the discussions was the necessity for creating a pool of Fever-trained nurses in case of just such an outbreak as actually occurred. Candour compels one to say that, in the crisis, the Ministry of Health were unable to afford us any assistance by supplying additional nursing staff. Miss Burleigh, Matron at the Isolation Hospital, was on continuous day and night duty for over three weeks single handed and with every ward full. No tribute can be too high for the patience, courage and tenacity with which she completed her task until relief was forthcoming from private sources. You will note that the 104 cases of Scarlet Fever admitted to the Hospital all recovered, though many were of a severe type. As to Diphtheria, the main trouble began at the end of the year as the result of an outbreak at the West Suffolk General Hospital. There were four deaths among twenty seven cases, one occurring half-an-hour after admission, two others, both infants under three months old, within a few days. Altogether the year 1940 proved to be the most trying in my long control of the Isolation Hospital.

Mr. Eldred has been without clerical assistance throughout the year, and, despite the great increase in Circulars and Memoranda from the Ministry, arising from war conditions, which frequently call for acknowledgement or detailed reply, he has earned the thanks of the Council, as of myself, for working out of hours in his resolve to keep abreast of his regular duties.

In conclusion I have to add that over 1500 evacuees were accommodated in the Borough in addition to the Registrar General's figures for the normal population.

I have the honour to be
Your obedient servant,

ERNEST STORK

Medical Officer of Health.

STAFF

There are no changes to be recorded under this heading.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

In dealing with this matter it should be remembered that in addition to the Registrar General's estimate of the Resident Population, the Chief Billeting Officer has added over 1500 people as either official evacuees or residents who hope to stay in the Borough for the duration of the war.

Area	3659 acres
Registrar-General's estimate of resident population	17060 X
Census 1931	16708
Number of Inhabited Houses (estimated)	4967 X
Rateable value	£10559.
A penny rate represents £444.	

Social conditions.

Out-door relief - The figures for out-door relief while showing little difference in the numbers in receipt of help, the cost shows a diminution of about £500 owing to the operation of the new Pensions Act, 70 cases having ceased to receive relief from August, 1940.

Men	142	(148)	
Women	257	(192)	
Children	211	(177)	
Total	570	(517)	
Cost	£3742. 13. 3	(£4203. 15. 5)	

Casuals - The fall in the number of casuals is very striking as will be seen from the figures given below, the total being 1412 as against 5589 for 1939.

Men	1412	(5354)	
Women	0	(200)	
Children	0	(25)	
Total	1412	(5589)	

Vital Statistics.

The birth rate per 1000 has shown a fall commensurate with that for England and Wales in general. The still births show an increase, which instead of being about half that of the country as in the previous year, approximates to it. This is also reflected in the figure for Infant Mortality which has risen in almost exactly the same proportion. This can only be ascribed to the strain of pregnancy and prematurity during the second year of the war. There were no maternal deaths either from puerperal sepsis or other puerperal causes for the second year in succession.

Live births	total	male	female
Legitimate	225 (228)	115 (104)	110 (124)
Illegitimate	9 (11)	5 (7)	4 (4)

Birth rate per 1000 of Population	13.7	(14.04)
do. do. England & Wales	14.6	(15.0)

Stillbirths - Total	9 (5)	M 5 (2) F 4 (3)
Rate per 1000 of population	.52	(.29)
do. do. England & Wales	.55	(.59)
Rate per 1000 total (live & still births)	37.0	(20.49)

Deaths.	total	male	female
	236 (221)	108 (111)	128 (110)

Crude death rate per 1000 of population	13.8	(12.9)
Death rate corrected for areal comparability	12.4	(10.9)
do. for England & Wales	14.3	(12.1)

Deaths from Puerperal causes -

Puerperal sepsis	0	(0)
Other puerperal causes	0	(0)
Total	0	(0)
Rate per 1000 total births	0	(0)

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age - Total	Male	Female	
Legitimate	17 (10)	9 (3)	8 (7)
Illegitimate	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Rate, legitimate, per 1000 live births	64	(37.8)
Do. England & Wales	55	(50.0)

Deaths from Cancer	28	(30)
" " Measles (all ages)	0	(0)
" " Whooping cough	0	(0)
" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	1	(0)

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

These have been maintained without change or any reduction in their efficiency.

Infant and Child Welfare.— The figures show a considerable increase in the number of Health Visitors' visits to both infants and children which may to some extent account for the falling off in the number of those attending the Clinic. The figures for evacuees, however, show a very considerable increase in clinic attendances of both infants and children, while the Health Visitors' visits have been very largely increased. On the whole the work of the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre has fully attained the level reported for 1939.

Number of Sessions	98	(103)
" attending Clinic - Infants under 1 year	194	(209)
" " " " Children over 1 year	263	(192)
Total number of attendances - Infants	1289	(1606)
" " " " Children	977	(1156)
Health Visitors' Visits to Infants	1590	(1292)
" " " " Children	2677	(2336)
Evacuees -		
Number attending Clinic - Infants	51	(24)
" " " " Children	73	(34)
Total number of attendances - Infants	207	(81)
" " " " Children	161	(87)
Health Visitors' Visits to Infants	237	(48)
" " " " Children	315	(141)

The School Clinic, treated 1038 individual children, with a total of 6788 attendances.

The Isolation Hospital. As already noted, the 101 cases of Scarlet Fever and 25 cases of Diphtheria were considerably above the average.

The Children's Act. Ten children have been kept under observation by Miss Osborne, their home conditions being uniformly satisfactory.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water, Drainage and Sewerage. There were no important alterations under these headings.

Closet Accommodation. All closets are on the water carriage system.

SCHOOLS

The Elementary Schools are all supplied with water from the public supply and connected with the public sewerage system. The sanitary arrangements at the old disused St. Mary's Infant School to which attention was drawn last year, have now been improved and rendered satisfactory, thanks entirely to the generosity of Messrs. Green King & Sons Ltd., who own the property.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

The inspection of Dairies and Cowsheds has been maintained. One licence to bottle T.T. milk, two for the sale of T.T. (Certified) milk and one for the sale of "Pasteurised" milk were issued.

Meat and other foods. On January 1st, there were 11 licensed slaughterhouses in the district, all but one of which were closed upon the Government taking over control of slaughtering. For a part of the year this one was used for the slaughter of calves, and only occasionally for other animals. In June however, this and two others were put into general use for the slaughter of all animals for Bury St. Edmunds and the surrounding district. Alterations and improvements were made. During the year 12,720 carcasses were inspected.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

This subject has been referred to in the introduction. It is noteworthy that of 137 cases of Scarlet Fever, all recovered. Diphtheria generally, was of a more severe type than that to which we have become accustomed in recent years. It is regrettable that the 12 cases of Pneumonia notified all proved fatal.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS)

Diseases	Total number Notified.	Removed to Hospital	Deaths
Scarlet Fever	137	101	0
Diphtheria	28	27	4
Typhoid Fever	1	0	0
Puerperal Fever	1	0	0
Pneumonia	12	0	12
Whooping cough	46	0	0
Measles	26	0	0
Erysipelas	5	0	0

The one case of Puerperal Fever notified occurred in an Institution. This shows that the Maternity services in the Borough, generally speaking, stand on a very high level.

Vaccination. The Vaccination Acts are administered according to the Law as it stands.

Prevention of Blindness. Section 176 of the Public Health Act 1936. The Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic deals with all cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum. For the ninth year in succession there was no case notified.

Tuberculosis. Six male and four female deaths were attributed to this disease.

Age periods	New cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
5	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
35	2	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
45	1	-	-	-	3	1	1	-
55	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
65 & over	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	9	3	1	1	5	3	1	1

INQUESTS.

* Five inquests were held and fifteen deaths were certified by the Coroner without an inquest.

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR 1940 IN BURY ST. EDMUNDS.

Registrar-
General's
Figures.

	M	F
ALL CAUSES	108	128
1. Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	-	-
2. Cerebro-spinal Fever	-	-
3. Scarlet Fever	-	-
4. Whooping cough	-	-
5. Diphtheria	-	1
6. Tuberculosis of Respiratory system	5	3
7. Other forms of tuberculosis	1	1
8. Syphilitic diseases	2	1
9. Influenza	2	4
10. Measles	-	-
11. Acute Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	-	-
12. Acute infectious Encephalitis	-	-
13. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus (M) and Uterus (F)	1	4
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum	1	-
15. Cancer of breast	-	3
16. Cancer of all other sites	8	14
17. Diabetes	-	2
18. Intra-cranial vascular lesions	10	11
19. Heart Disease	31	47
20. Other diseases of circulatory system	12	3
21. Bronchitis	5	6
22. Pneumonia	3	9
23. Other respiratory diseases	1	2
24. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	-	1
25. Diarrhoea (under two years)	1	-
26. Appendicitis	1	-
27. Other digestive diseases	2	2
28. Nephritis	5	2
29. Puerperal and post abortive sepsis	-	-
30. Other maternal causes	-	-
31. Premature birth	1	2
32. Congenital malformations, birth injury, infantile disease	6	4
33. Suicide	1	2
34. Road traffic accidents	1	-
35. Other violent causes	4	-
36. All other causes	4	7
